1 Aug 70

Dear Howard (cc Weisberg)

I'll be away from Kingston during next week, so don't expect replies to letters that you have sent recently. More easy times: my sister and family are coming up and we are staying at a lake cottage next to them for the week. There will be some fishing and continued work in brushing off the rough edges of my thesis for final presentation. This letter is largely in reply to material in your recent letters.

Front-neck wound: Reconsidering what I have said, I think the only vulnerable point is Bennett's report. I do not, however, consider it very vulnerable, for I think it reflects the fact that B saw JFK wounded in the back. It is important to remember that B wrote that report before anybody knew there was a back wound. It is virtually impossible that B reported an imaginary happening that later turned out to be true. He did, after all, fairly accurately describe the location of the wound as 5 (?) inches down from the collar. That accuracy and the knowledge that he reported before there was any knowledge of the back wound is sufficient to convince me that he actually saw ~~xxxxx~~ what he thought he saw.

I think the evidence is sufficent that JFK was wounded before Z202. The question is, where? If you wish to assert that it might have been in the back, then you must discredit the assertion that B saw JFK at the moment of back wounding. If you cannot satisfactorally discredit that, then you must conclude that the first shot hit the front of the neck.

Further on Mrs. K's description of JFK's facial expression. She implied it was unusual and that it did not materially change during the time she was looking at him. If he was ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ first wounded after Z202, I think there would have been considerable change of expression, especially if this wounding caused the very painful damage to ~~xxx~~ internal neck and trachea. I doubt whether the sound of gunshot alone would have caused very unusual facial expression (especially since such noise was confused with normal motorcycle backfire). And I don't think that noise alone can account for the unusual movement of JFK right arm beginning about Z198.

Photos: I'll await ~~pictures~~ prints and slides from you. When I get them, I'll make slide copies for the three of us, and will make extra if I have the cash at the time.

Bothun/Altgens: I would have to see the pictures in question before I admit to being wrong in identification of photographers. Bothun is fat, kind of pear shaped; Altgens thin. Bothun is visible standing behind Altgens in Z film.

SOB Jack Kennedy sign: I would not take Sprague's word on what the sign says. I have seen the picture in question, and an enlargement of the man with the sign. I could not read the sign. I can't say that Sprague is wrong, but I think you should see his picture before you begin thinking that he may be right. In many ways and on many days Sprague sees what he wants to see. I previously tended to trust his observation, if not his judgment, but now I trust neither.

Paris Match recent did a piece reviewing some of Spragues' C & A article. It was a dreadfully inacurate account of what was dreadful to begin with. I sent Sprague a close paraphrase translation of it. Did not make a copy, as it is useless.

Rambler sta-wagon: I think it useful to note the presence of this car where it appears. It is at least some corroboration for Craig and others re this car.

Brennan: Your observation is excellent. Anything you can get discrediting this awful man is worthwhile. There is already much, but what you add stands with the best.

Back measurements: I really fail to see what you hope to prove that cannot be proved by better means. I reserve judgment until I see all that you have done, but my initial impression is that you are wasting time that you cannot afford to waste. You are working with whole sets of indefinites, and cannot reasonably expect to achieve definite results. What results you do achieve cannot be more suggestive than what has already been determined by other means.

Credit: The proper way of crediting unpublished writing is to include the word "unpublished" after the reference to author and title. E.g., Harold Weisberg, Post-Mortem: Suppressed Kennedy Autopsy (unpublished; © 1969), p. 92. Some other forms are suitable, too, but I think that one is all right.

Use of correspondence: I doubt whether you could be stopped from quoting from correspondence, but I would check with a copyright lawyer to be sure. I don't think there would be any hindrance to paraphrasing letters. Best to see a lawyer.
Maybe the best thing is to go ahead and do it as you like. If you get a publisher, the publisher will have the book checked for such things.

LHO innocence: To me, there is no more important objective than to lay reasonable grounds for believing that LHO is innocent of shooting. The better if you can prove it. Do not look upon this as sour grapes; if you are disconcerted about having revised you original opinions re the shooting as a whole. If this can be proved(that LHO did not shoot) convincingly enough to gain widespread acceptance, then the thousand other spiders will emerge from the walls. It is a key issue. Many people compacently accept that there was a conspiracy with LHO os one of the shooters. The situation would be unbearable for the government without LHO. They absolutely must have him.

Spacing of type: By all means use double spaces and leave ample margins-- plenty of room for corrections and comments. Consider the comfort and convenience of your prospective publisher.

Have to stop. Will write after next week.

Harold: Got another letter to Skolnick off asking for names... My info re Jerry Ray is the same as yours. Gary gets Thunderbolt, so he may have something of interest.... I can't remember asking you: did you see True, April 1970? Concerning CIA, Mafia, and Haiti. It names people we know: e.g., Bob Brown, H.K. Davis, Kolby, and many others. If you don't have it, ask me to send it.

Dick